to the Director, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta for the identification of molluscs from River Narmada.

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## 18. A CASE OF ALBINISM IN *HETEROPNEUSTES FOSSILIS* (BLOCH)

An immature albino specimen of *Heteropneustes fossilis* (Bloch) was obtained from a pond at Joysagar Fish Farm, Assam in the month of April, 1965. The entire body of the fish was white with a bluish patch on either side of the body behind pectoral fin. The colour of the eyes, even in living condition of the specimen was also white. Each eye had a slightly dark ring at the periphery caused probably by the colour of the internal tissue. The albino measured 131 mm. in length and weighed 14·6 gm. Abnormality neither in external nor internal organs of the albino was observed.

Albinism in fish is uncommon and has been described only in a few cat fishes and in an eel. Hora (1926) has recorded partial albinism in Magur, *Clarias batrachus* (Linn.). Other instances of albinism are recorded by Dean (1923) in *Clarias angularis* and *Silurus* sp. and by Aitkin (1937) in *Ictalurus punctatus*. Jones & Pantulu (1952) have described albinism in the freshwater eel, *Anguila bengalensis*. Gupta & Bhowmic (1958) recorded an albino *Arius jella* Day. The occurence of albinism in *Heteropneustes fossilis* (Bloch) forms another record of this phenomenon among cat fish so far recorded in India.

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JOYSAGAR, ASSAM.
*November* 15, 1966.

M. C. BARUAH

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## 19. ON THE INTRODUCTION OF *PHASLA JAL*, A GILL NET, FOR CATCHING *HILSA* IN THE GANGA AND YAMUNA NEAR ALLAHABAD

(*With a text-figure*)

A detailed account of the fishing nets and traps employed in a section of the middle reaches of the Ganga River System, during 1963 has been given by Saxena (1966). At that time he reported, that gill net was not used in this stretch for catching *Hilsa*, although major carps and catfishes were being caught with gill nets, such as *Tiar* and *Gochail*. Jones (1959 a & b) while describing fishing gears used for the capture of *Hilsa*, has also not recorded this gear. The net described here has been recently introduced in the Ganga and Yamuna near Allahabad reportedly during 1964. Lightness, convenience for operation, better yield with less effort are the advantages of this net. Probably because of these, the net has gained popularity in this region within a very short period, in spite of the high initial cost owing to nylon being used in its fabrication. The cost of the net comes to approximately fifty rupees.

Made of nylon twine of varying thickness, a single piece of the net commonly known as *Phasla Jal*, has 280-300 meshes across and 40-50 meshes in depth. The head rope, usually 1-2 mm. in thickness and made of either nylon or cotton, measures 15·62 m. in length. Floats, made of several thin reeds joined together and measuring 13·5 cm. in length and 4 mm. in diameter, are tied to the head rope at intervals of 38·5 cm. leaving about 10 meshes free in between every two floats. Usually one mesh is left free along the length of the float (Figs. 1 and 2). Two to three such pieces are usually joined together in operation. The most common mesh sizes encountered are 8·5 cm., 9·0 cm. and 10·5 cm. (stretched). Sometimes pieces of different mesh sizes are also combined together for catching different size groups. The net is quite often dyed blue probably as a camouflage. A notable feature of the net is the complete absence of the bottom rope and sinkers.